Lafayette Public Library Board meeting minutes

Remote meeting via Zoom Conference

October 11, 2021

I. Call to order at 6:32 pm

Present: Chair Olivia Ameigh, Vice Chair Susan Curtis, Secretary Dave Belin, Randy Bender, Jess Gribble, Ed Knight, Jody Tracy, Denice Walker, Autumn Warrington, Library Director Melissa Hisel, and Assistant Director Scott Foley.

- II. **Library Mission**: "The Lafayette Public Library brings community, information, and ideas together to inspire learning, literacy, and discovery."
- III. Comments from Public: None.
- IV. **Approval of Minutes from September 2021 Meeting**: Curtis moved to accept the minutes from the September 2021 meeting, as written; Ameigh seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
- V. **Discussion: HRC Recommendation for Removal of Mary Miller Mural:** The board discussed the recommendation from the Human Rights Committee (HRC) to remove the Miller name from various Lafayette landmarks, including the mural on the south side of the library building.

Members of the HRC attended the meeting to present a summary or research on the issue, the rationale behind their recommendation, and to answer questions from the LPL board.

Questions and discussion touched on a wide range of subjects and thoughts, including the following:

- The budgetary implications for the City and/or the Library, which were not specifically researched as part of the HRC recommendation. Could the funds be better used for education and inclusion programs?
- The distinction between Mary Miller individually and the Miller family in general, and the desire to have a better understanding of the difference between the two. Can we gain a better understanding about Mary Miller specifically and if she actively promoted white supremacist or other racist views?
- The HRC recommendation addresses the removal of Mary Miller but does not specify removing Lafayette Miller. Is there a clarification on that issue?
- Discussion about practices that were common in the time but are now seen as not acceptable. HRC commented about today's context and how it contributes to ongoing harm to people in the community today. The HRC contends that the Miller name continues to do harm and does not represent values that Lafayette strives to stand for today.
- There were suggestions from the Library Board for considering using the mural as an opportunity for education. Would there be an option to change the signage to explain and educate? We don't want to erase the history prematurely, maybe education is an option to consider? Is taking the mural down erasing? Can we be more creative?

- A desire to gain a greater understanding of the original intent of the mural itself, which on the surface appears to honor Mary Miller and the mining heritage of Lafayette. Was the historical context and original intent to honor a woman doing things that most women didn't do in those days? Hisel offered to do more research into the origin of the mural.
- How do people in the Latinx community feel about the library mural specifically?
- Members of the Library Board expressed interest in understanding the lived experience of others in the community, to support community engagement, to honor the current values of the City of Lafayette, and to offer programs/services to educate the community on a more complete and more varied version of the history of Lafayette.
- A desire to learn more about harm and trauma, and the true meaning of equity.
- A discussion about the background on how and why the HRC reached its recommendation, including the value in recognizing and appreciating what Mary Miller did; and that the historical record should be accurate in showing what Mary Miller did and didn't do.
- The Library Board thanked and commended the HRC for the thorough work and for the time to present the information. The board expressed a desire for a positive working relationship between the two groups.

Motion: Belin motioned, in response to the HRC recommendation, the library board support conducting research about the origin of the mural and to participate in community conversation and education regarding issue. Bender seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

- VI. Staff Update: Tabled to November meeting
- VII. Library Organizational Realignment Presentation: Tabled to November meeting
- VIII. **Foundation Update**. Next book sale will be November 13 to 21, 2021. Remainder of the Foundation update was tabled until the November meeting.
- IX. City Council Liaison Report: None
- X. Other Business: None
- XI. **Next Meeting Date**: Monday, November 8, 2021 at 6:30 pm, either via Zoom or in person at the library (TBD).
- XII. **Adjourn:** Tracy motioned to adjourn; Bender seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:10 pm.

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